

Avery Palshaw

Carmel High School

Sunshine Medical Components' general counsel acquitted of murder charges of company's CEO

MONTEREY - General counsel for billion-dollar medical technology corporation, Sunshine Medical Components, was acquitted of first degree murder charges of SMC's chief executive officer in an intense trial at the Monterey County Courthouse Thursday night.

Tobie Clark was arrested last August by Kingley County Police Department's lead investigator Detective Nova Perren, for allegedly killing Kieran Sunshine after stabbing him with a champagne saber in his upper-right abdomen on July 16 at the Bells Hotel.

Through careful inspection, county medical examiner Dr. K.C. Vasquez concluded Sunshine's cause of death was uncontrolled hemorrhaging, resulting from the stab wound.

Prosecution attorney Robert Bonilla insisted that Clark's fingerprints being found on the champagne saber's handle, despite personally giving Sunshine the saber on the day of his murder, was sufficient evidence that she was guilty.

“The fingerprints simply do not lie,” declared prosecution attorney Joseph Bettencourt indisputably.

Sitting before the dimly lit courtroom, Clark testified that her intention in giving Sunshine the champagne saber and bottle of DeLulu champagne was to celebrate the announcement of ForeverFlex, a prosthetic joint replacement developed by SMC.

On the morning of Sunshine’s death, Clark recalls the CEO telling her ForeverFlex was causing bacterial infections in patients, but that he planned to withhold the information from the SMC board. The general counsel claims she was not originally aware of ForeverFlex’s issues, explaining that last January Sunshine had told her the product yielded positive results. With worries of being liable for fraud, Clark alleges to skipping the board meeting and leaving the hotel around 5 a.m. on July 17.

Defense attorney Grant Xu argued that there were no eyewitnesses to the crime and a second set of fingerprints found on the saber remained unidentified, meaning that the possibility of another suspect was plausible.

Independent forensic pathologist Dr. Parker Turner, who examined the crime scene, determined that Sunshine’s puncture wound suggested that he was lying on his back at the time of his death, while the perpetrator likely stood over him.

From this evidence, the defense reasoned that SMC holistic wellness coach Gerri Moayed, though an unexpected suspect, was overdue to be under investigation for Sunshine's murder. Moayed was vulnerable to losing his job if Sunshine came forward about ForeverFlex's health concerns and the two often practiced yoga together, which initially was objected by Bettencourt for a lack of relevance, yet the defense explained it was the only sensible explanation as to why Sunshine would be lying on the floor when he was murdered.

"For Gerri Moayed, this crime was easy to commit and even easier to get away with," said Xu confidently.

Despite the efforts of the prosecution, a lack of both concrete evidence and eyewitnesses led Judge William Litt to find Clark not guilty of first degree murder.

After the verdict was read in court, the defendant, comforted by Xu and defense attorney Shayla Dutta, expressed a sigh and smile of relief.